

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented): A method for stirring a liquid, comprising:

sucking a part of a liquid into a nozzle from a liquid-containing container which opens at the top thereof; and

discharging the sucked liquid from the same nozzle directly into liquid remaining in the container at a discharging position which is horizontally different from a sucking position where the liquid has been sucked to thereby stir the liquid,

wherein the sucking and the discharging positions are controlled by automatic control.
2. (currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein the sucked liquid is discharged together with air, wherein the nozzle contains air before and during the sucking step.
3. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said sucking and said discharging are conducted plural times.
4. (original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the discharging position of n times is horizontally different from the discharging position of n-1 time(s), and wherein n represents an integer of 2 or more.

5. (original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the sucking position of n times is horizontally different from the sucking position of n-1 time(s), and wherein n represents an integer of 2 or more.

6. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the container has an inclination on the inside wall thereof, said inclination increasing in height toward the outside of the container, and the sucked liquid is discharged toward the inclination.

7. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the liquid is blood.

Claims 8-10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented): A method for stirring a liquid, comprising:
sucking a part of a liquid into a nozzle from a liquid-containing container which opens at the top thereof and has an inclination on the inside wall thereof; and
discharging the sucked liquid from the same nozzle directly toward the inclination at a discharging position which is horizontally different from a sucking position where the liquid has been sucked to thereby stir the liquid,
wherein the sucking and the discharging positions are controlled by automatic control.

12. (currently amended): The method according to claim 11, wherein the sucked liquid is discharged together with air, wherein the nozzle contains air before and during the sucking step.

13. (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, wherein said sucking and said discharging are conducted plural times.

14. (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the discharging position of n times is horizontally different from the discharging position of n-1 time(s), and wherein n represents an integer of 2 or more.

15. (previously presented): The method according to claim 13, wherein the sucking position of n times is horizontally different from the sucking position of n-1 time(s), and wherein n represents an integer of 2 or more.

16. (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, wherein the inclination increases in height toward the outside of the container.

17. (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, wherein the liquid is blood.

18. (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, wherein the discharging position is above the liquid level.

19. (previously presented): The method according to claim 1, which is used in an inspection apparatus.

20. (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, wherein the discharging position is above the liquid level.

21. (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, which is used in an inspection apparatus.

22. (new): The method according to claim 1, wherein the discharged position is limited to a position which is horizontally external to the sucked position.

23. (new): The method according to claim 11, wherein the discharged position is limited to a position which is horizontally external to the sucked position.

24. (new): The method according to claim 1, wherein the sucked position is near the center of the container.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/817,251

Atty. Docket No. Q63803

25. (new): The method according to claim 1, wherein the sucked position is near the center of the container.